1:Heckewelder M-5 (ca. 1800)1819
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# INTRODUCTION.

THE reader of the following pages, having already seen what has induced me to come forward with an historical account of the Indians, after so many have written on the same subject, will perhaps look for something more extraordinary in this, than in other works of the kind which he has seen. Not wishing any one to raise his expectations too high, I shall briefly state, that I have not written to excite astonishment, but for the information of those who are desirous of knowing the true history of those people, who, for centuries, have been in full possession of the country we now inhabit; but who have since emigrated to a great distance. I can only assure them, that I have not taken the information here communicated from the writings of others, but from the mouths of the very people I am going to speak of, and from my own observation of what I have witnessed while living among them. I have, however, occasionally quoted other authors, and in some instances copied short passages from their works, especially where I have thought it necessary to illustrate or corroborate my own statements of facts.

In what I have written concerning the character, customs, manners, and usages of these people, I cannot have been deceived, since it is the result of personal knowledge, of what I myself have seen, heard, and witnessed, while residing among and near them, for more than thirty years. I have however to remark, that this history, like other histories of former times, will not in every respect comport with the character of the Indians at the present time, since all these nations and tribes,

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114 an essential service to point out the means of avoiding those deceptions, which if not sufficiently guarded against, will at last destroy all belief in the accounts given by travellers of distant nations and of manners and customs different from our own.

124 The first and most important thing for a traveller is a competent knowledge of the language of the people among 114 whom he is. Without this knowledge it is impossible that he can acquire a correct notion of their manners and customs and of the opinions which prevail among them. There is little faith to be placed in those numerous vocabularies of the languages of distant nations which are to be found in almost every book of voyages or travels; they are generally full of the most ridiculous mistakes; at least (for I must speak only of what I know) those which relate to the Indian languages of North America. I was some years ago shewn a vocabulary* of the idiom of the Indians who inhabited the banks of the Delaware, while Pennsylvania was under the dominion of the Swedes, which idiom was no other than the pure Unami dialect of the Lenape, and I could hardly refrain from laughing at the numerous errors that I observed in it; for instance, the Indian word given for *hand*, in fact means *finger*. This is enough to shew how carelessly those vocabularies are made, and how little their authors are acquainted with the languages that they pretend to teach.

The cause of these mistakes may be easily accounted for. When pointing to a particular object you ask an Indian how it is called, he never will give you the name of the *genus*, but always that of the *species*. Thus if you point to a tree, and ask for its name, the answer will be oak, beech, chesnut, maple, &c. as the case may be. Thus the Swedish author of the vocabulary that I have mentioned, probably happened to point to a *finger*, when he

[113] * Vocabularium Barbaro-Virgineorum, bound with an Indian translation from the Swedish of Luther's Catechism. Stockholm, 1696, duod.

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asked what was the Indian word for *hand*, and on receiving the answer, without further enquiry enriched his work with this notable specimen of Indian learning.

When I first went to reside among the Indians, I took great care to learn by heart the words *Kœcu k'dellounda-men yun?* which mean *What do you call this?* Whenever I found the Indians disposed to attend to my enquiries, I would point to particular objects and repeat my formulary, and the answers that they gave I immediately wrote down in a book which I kept for the purpose; at last when I had written about half a dozen sheets, I found that I had more than a dozen names for "*tree*," as many for "*fish*," and so on with other things and yet I had not a single generic name. What was still worse, when I pointed to something, repeating the name or one of the names by which I had been taught to call it, I was sure to excite a laugh; and when in order to be set right I put the question *Kœcu*, &c. I would receive for answer a new word or name which I had never heard before. This began to make me believe that every thing was not as it should be, and that I was not in the right way to learn the Indian language.

It was not only in substantives or the proper names of things that I found myself almost always mistaken. Those who are not acquainted with the copiousness of the Indian languages, can hardly form an idea of the various shades and combinations of ideas that they can express. For instance, the infinitive *Mitzin*, signifies *to eat*, and so does *Mohoan*. Now although the first of these words is sufficiently expressive of the act of eating something, be it what it may, yet the Indians are very attentive to expressing in one word what and how they have eaten, that is to say whether they have been eating something which needed no chewing, as pottage, mush or the like, or something that required the use of the teeth. In the latter case the proper word is *mohoan*, and in the former *guntammen*. If an Indian is asked *k'dapi mitzi?* have

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124 you eaten? he will answer *n'dapi guntammen*, or *n'dapi mohoa*, according as what he has eaten did or did not require the aid of chewing. If he has eaten of both kinds of provisions at his meal, he will then use the generic word, and say, *n'dapi mitzi*, which means generally, *I have eaten.*

124 126 These niceties of course escaped me, and what was worse, few of the words I had taken down were correctly written. Essential letters or syllables, which in the rapidity of pronunciation had escaped my ear, were almost every where omitted. When I tried to make use of the words which I had so carefully collected, I found I was not understood, and I was at a loss to discover the cause to which I might attribute my want of success in the earnest endeavours that I was making to acquire the Indian tongue.

At last there came an Indian, who was conversant with the English and German, and was much my friend. I hastened to lay before him my learned collection of Indian words, and was very much astonished when he advised me immediately to burn the whole, and write no more. "The first thing" said he, "that you are to do "to learn our language is to get an Indian *ear*; when "that is obtained, no sound, no syllable will ever escape "your hearing it, and you will at the same time learn "the true pronunciation and how to accent your words "properly; the rest will come of itself." I found he was right. By listening to the natives, and repeating the words to myself as they spoke them, it was not many months before I ventured to converse with them and finally understood every word they said. The Indians are very proud of a white man's endeavouring to learn their language; they help him in every thing that they can, and it is not their fault if he does not succeed.

124 The language, then, is the first thing that a traveller ought to endeavour to acquire, at least, so as to be able to make himself understood and to understand others.

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Without this indispensible requisite he may write about the soil, earth and stones, describe trees and plants that grow on the surface of the land, the birds that fly in the air and the fishes that swim in the waters, but he should by no means attempt to speak of the disposition and characters of the human beings who inhabit the country, and even of their customs and manners, which it is impossible for him to be sufficiently acquainted with. And indeed, even with the advantage of the language, this knowledge is not to be acquired in a short time, so different is the impression which new objects make upon us at first sight, and that which they produce on a nearer view. I could speak the Delaware language very fluently but I was yet far from being well acquainted with the character and manners of the Lenape.

The Indians are very ready to answer the enquiries that are made respecting the usages of their country. But they are very much disgusted with the manner which they say some white people have of asking them questions on questions, without allowing them time to give a proper answer to any one of them. They, on the contrary, never ask a second question until they have received a full answer to the first. They say of those who do otherwise, that they seem as if they wished to know a thing, yet cared not whether they knew it correctly or properly. There are some men who before the Indians have well understood the question put to them, begin to write down their answers; of these they have no good opinion, thinking that they are writing something unfavourable of them.

There are men who will relate incredible stories of the Indians, and think themselves sufficiently warranted because they have Indian authority for it. But these men ought to know that all that an Indian says is not to be relied upon as truth. I do no mean to say that they are addicted to telling falsehoods, for nothing is farther from their character; but they are fond of the marvellous, and

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124 when they find a white man inclined to listen to their tales of wonder, or credulous enough to believe their superstitious notions, there are always some among them ready to entertain him with tales of that description, as it gives them an opportunity of diverting themselves in their leisure hours, by relating such fabulous stories, while they laugh at the same time at their being able to deceive a people who think themselves so superior to them in wisdom and knowledge. They are fond of trying white men who come among them, in order to see whether they can act upon them in this way with success. Travellers who cannot speak their language, and are not acquainted with their character, manners and usages, should be more particularly careful not to ask them questions that touch in any manner upon their superstitious notions, or, as they are often considered even by themselves "fabulous amusements." Nor should a stranger ever display an anxiety to witness scenes of this kind, but rather appear indifferent about them. In this manner he cannot be misled by interested persons or those who have formed a malicious design to deceive him. Whenever such a disposition appears (and it is not difficult to be discovered) questions of this kind should be reserved for another time, and asked in a proper manner before other persons, or of those who would be candid and perhaps let the enquirer into the secret.

114 484 I have been led to consider Carver, who otherwise is deserving of credit for the greatest part of what he has written on the character of the Indians, to have been imposed upon in the story which he relates of having learned by means of a conjurer (the chief priest of the Killistenoes, as he calls him) who pretended to have had a conversation with the great Spirit, the precise time when a canoe should come, and certain traders who had been long expected should arrive.* Had Carver resided a longer time among the Indians, so as to have acquired a

* Carver's Travels, Introduction, p. 72. Boston Edit, 1797.

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sues should come, for that must have been known already, and that the people in it would tell them where the traders were, and when they might be expected to arrive.

As in or about the year 1774, I was travelling with some Christian Indians, two Indians of the same nation, but strangers to us, fell in with us just as we were going to encamp, and joined us for the night. One of them was an aged grave looking man, whom I was pleased to see in our company, and I flattered myself with obtaining some information from him, as, according to the Indian custom, age always takes the lead in conversation. I soon, however, perceived, to my great mortification, that he dwelt on subjects which I had neither a taste for nor an ear to hear; for his topic was the supernatural performances of Indians through the agency of an unseen Mannitto. I did not pay any attention to what he said, nor did any of our Christian Indians shew marks of admiration or astonishment at the stories he was telling, but sat in silence smoking their pipes. The speaker having, after an hour's time, finished his relations, the oldest Indian in my company addressed himself to me and said: "Now you have heard what some Indians can "perform. Have you ever heard the like before, and do "you believe all you have heard?" "There are," I answered, "many things that I have heard of the Indians, "and which I believe to be true, and such things I like to "hear; but there are also things which they relate "which I do not believe, and therefore do not wish to "know them. While our friend here was just now tel- "ling us stories of this kind, which I cannot believe, I "was wishing all the time that he might soon have fi- "nished and tell us something better." The Indian, taking the hint in good part, asked me then what things I should like to hear? On which I made him this reply: "As you are a man already in years, and much older "than myself, you must have seen many things that I

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124 "have not seen, and heard much that I have not heard. "Now I should like to hear the history of your life; "where you was born, at what age you shot your first "deer, what things you heard of your father and your "grandfather relative to old times; where they supposed "the Indians to have come from, and what traditions they "had respecting them. I should like also to know how "many children you have had; how far you have tra- "velled in your lifetime, and what you have seen and "heard in your travels. See!" added I, "these are the "things that I should like to hear of the Indians; any "thing of the kind from you will give me pleasure." The Indian then, highly pleased with my candour, rea- dily complied, and having related every thing remarka- ble that had come within his observation and knowledge, I thanked him, saying that I should never forget him, nor what he had now related to me, but that I would try to forget what he had related in the beginning. The In- dians who were with me, following the thread of the con- versation, continued to entertain us with rational stories, and the evening was spent very agreeably. In the morn- ing, when we parted, the strange Indian whom I had thus rebuked, shook me cordially by the hand, saying: "Friend! you shall never be forgotten by me. Indeed I "call you my *friend*."

I would take the liberty to recommend to those who may hereafter travel among the Indians, in any part of America, to be particular in their enquiries respecting the connexion of the different nations or tribes with each other, especially when the analogy of their respective languages leads to infer such *relationship*, as the Indians call it. I beg leave to suggest a few questions, which, I think, ought always to be asked. They may lead to much useful information respecting the various migra- tions and the original places of residence of the Indian nations, and perhaps produce more important discove- ries.

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1. What is the name of your tribe? Is it its original name; if not, how was it formerly called?

2. Have you a tradition of your lineal descent as a nation or tribe?

3. To what tribes are you related by blood, and where do they reside?

4. What is your character or rank in the national family?

5. Which among the tribes connected with you is that which you call *grandfather*?

6. Where is the great council fire of all the nations or tribes connected with yours?

7. How do you address the chiefs and council of such a nation or tribe?

8. What is the badge of your tribe?

From these and other similar questions, much valuable information will probably result. The nation whom another tribe calls *grandfather*, is certainly the head of the family to which they both belong. At his door burns the "great national council fire," or, in other words, at the place where he resides with his counsellors, as the great or supreme chief of the national family, the heads of the tribes in the connexion occasionally assemble to deliberate on their common interests; any tribe may have a council fire of its own, but cannot dictate to the other tribes, nor compel any of them to take up the hatchet against an enemy; neither can they conclude a peace for the whole; this power entirely rests with the great national chief, who presides at the council fire of their *grandfather*.

Indian nations or tribes connected with each other are not always connected by blood or descended from the same original stock. Some are admitted into the connexion by adoption. Such are the Tuscaroras among the Six Nations; such the Cherokees among the Lenni Lenape. Thus, in the year 1779, a deputation of fourteen men came from the Cherokee nation to the council

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fire of the Delawares, to condole with their *grandfather* on the loss of their head chief. There are tribes, on the other hand, who have wandered far from the habitations of those connected with them by blood or relationship. It is certain that they can no longer be benefited by the general council fire. They, therefore, become a people by themselves, and pass with us for a separate nation, if they only have a name; nevertheless, (if I am rightly informed) they well know to what stock or nation they originally belonged, and if questioned on that subject, will give correct answers. It is therefore very important to make these enquiries of any tribe or nation that a traveller may find himself among. The analogy of languages is the best and most unequivocal sign of connexion between Indian tribes; yet the absence of that indication should not always be relied upon.

It may not be improper also to mention in this place that the purity or correctness with which a language is spoken, will greatly help to discover who is the head of the national family. For no where is the language so much cultivated as in the vicinity of the great national council fire, where the orators have the best opportunity of displaying their talents. Thus the purest and most elegant dialect of the Lenape language, is that of the Unami or Turtle tribe.

# APPENDIX II

## USES OF MEDICINAL PLANTS AMONG THE CANADIAN DELAWARE

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THE following notes on the medicine practices of the Six Nations Delaware, Grand River Reserve, located near Hagersville, in Brant County, Ontario, Canada, were recorded during a visit to the reserve in November, 1931. The group consists of about 150 individuals of mixed Indian and white blood. Only a few, however, have any knowledge of the language and traditions of the Delaware who once inhabited the section of the country now known as Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. To find the identity and location of the predecessors of the band now in question, who migrated to Canada, will be impossible until a comparative study has been made of the various vocabularies.

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I am indebted to Mrs. Martha Peters Hill, Nicholas Powless, his sister, Mrs. Maracle, Joseph Montour, John Lickers, and Walter Moses for aid in securing the Delaware information herein presented.

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In contrast to the ceremonies connected with the various processes of healing as employed by the Oklahoma Delaware, we find only a few traces of such rites among the Delaware of Canada. Plant parts to be used for medicinal purposes should be gathered when the vital properties are in that part of the plant (the flower, root, etc.), to be used. One informant added that plants should be gathered before the fireflies appear. When seeking herbal plants, the first of the desired species should not be plucked. It is customary to pass on to another of the same variety and there dig a small hole beside the plant and in it place an offering of tobacco. If a large quantity of herbs were gathered, they were tied in bundles and allowed to dry in the sun, to prevent mould. Some dried their plants in a warm room.

When bark is used it is taken from the east side of a tree; only the inner bark, which is usually peeled downward, is used. Roots may be scraped or cut into small portions.

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Medicinal plants are regarded as being sensitive to handling, and when brewing medicine, care must be taken to refrain from stirring the mixture while it is steeping. After being thoroughly steeped, the medicine is removed from the fire, and if necessary, stirred only toward the

10: Speck E-4, 5 (ca. 1925) 1931
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796 174 171 comprising the Delaware Nation is evident from all sources. That it ruled the spiritual destinies of the Munsee, the Nanticoke, the Mahikan, we know through collateral evidence, and analogous rites are inferred to have existed among the Mohegan on the east, the Powhatan peoples of Virginia and the Algonkian of the Carolina coast. Testimony from modern sources also points to a related performance of equal prominence in the religious behavior of the Shawnee. It would be an oversight besides, not to make reference to certain indications in the recorded discussions of Iroquois and Central Algonkian religion, of periodic ceremonies whose fundamental concepts form more or less a unit with those of the nation we are considering. Such a widely spread doctrine with associated rites of a unitary character assure us of the existence in aboriginal times of a culture-center, as regards creed, among the peoples of the Allegheny forest area, not only among the widely scattered Algonkian-speaking peoples but among others whose early history has been linked by some vague channels with them, 796 for instance the Muskogi and the Yuchi. If it is not going too far, I 174 would venture to repeat the assertion, often made by students of human culture, that the religious concepts of preliterate people express the keynote of their cultural status, that the same are to be regarded as forming their most conservative culture properties, reflecting the entire system of their culture in ramifications leading off to other topics of ethnology, the food-quest, social organization, warfare, art-symbolism, as well as rulings of simple custom and ethical character; indeed where not? This assumption, as we shall see, holds true with amazing consistency in the native civilization of the Delawares. While the pre- 114 viously recorded accounts of Delaware ceremonies, some of them explicit in detail and accuracy, have supplied occasional material for comparative and analytical studies in the ethnology of the eastern Indians, a feeling of dissatisfaction exists in regard to their content. This has been sufficient to cause hesitation on the part of ethnologists in using the records for the purpose of drawing culture conclusions since the accounts have all been fragmentary and recorded in the words of European observers instead of being based upon the expressions of the natives.[1] To have such records made in the words, and with the order and detail of thought of the people themselves is the highest ideal of the student of human institutions, an ideal now set up as the goal of endeavor in research. Accordingly when fate was moved 124 to provide me with a native Delaware informant in the person of 115 Wi·tapano'xwe, a Delaware whose early training, at the knees of his mother, was of the native, non-Christian type, I need hardly say that I laid aside every postponable obligation to devote attention to the

[1] More recently we have been bequeathed the excellent studies of eastern Indian ceremonies in native text by students who have recorded them from the dictation of the Indians, such as Hewitt, Jones, Michelson and Bloomfield.

10: Speck E-4, 5 (ca. 1925) 1931
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task of taking down from his lips his version of the entire doctrine and the ceremony of his tribe at which he had upon so many occasions been present. The results of our combined effort during four months of writing are accordingly laid forth. The entire body of information, the arrangement of thought and wording are his; the concepts extracted from the teachings of his early life, the ritual procedures reproduced from memory of participation in them, and the monologues, are from his memory of repeated hearings by their narrators. The mechanical task, the notations, are mine.

Few undertakings in my experience have proved so pleasant. Wi·tapano'xwe, or War Eagle, (frontispiece) as he is known in his profession of herbalist, displayed the patience, the courtesy, and character of a gentleman. Representing the type once referred to by Doctor Dorsey as a natural gentleman and sport, the Indian was still unspoiled by a mercenary and material civilization; the simple-mannered, sympathetic, beautifully poised, contented, nature-loving, thoughtful and mystic Algonkian. He deserves more extensive personal notice since he typifies Emerson's definition of a great man as one "who in the crowd keeps the independence of solitude."

Wi·tapano'xwe, "Walking with Daylight," of the Fowl, or so-called Turkey group (pele')[1] of the Delawares, was born in the Cooweescoowee district of the Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory, about 1880, according to his information, and as such he is listed in the records of the Dawes Commission.[2] His father was a member of the Cherokee Nation of the West. Being of Munsee descent on his mother's side he was elected to the Council of the Fowl or Turkey division of this tribe in 1902, and re-elected secretary of the Delaware executive council by the combined Delaware and Munsee tribes in 1921.

The history of the Delawares shows that they have passed through a series of momentous culture transitions before and since the coming of the whites. We assume that before being disturbed by the northward advance of the Iroquois they, together with the closely related Munsee, presented a type of culture differing from the after-period, during which assimilation with the Iroquois had progressed. Subsequently came the Dutch and Quaker contacts, ushering in a period which ended at the time of the withdrawal of the tribe from the east. Then came the period of migration westward, opening closer association with the trans-Alleghenean peoples (Wyandot, Mingo, Shawnee, Piankashaw, Miami). Their next move brought them into the central plains area producing acculturation in externalities with phases of Prairie culture as they met such exponents of

[1] One of the three major social subdivisions of the tribe, for definition of which see page 75.

[2] His enrollment name is James C. Webber, under Dawes' Commission Cherokee Roll No. 31516.

16:Morgan E-S (1859)1958
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[p 54(B)]

D 797 worth, and went from there to the Shawnee Baptist Mission now closed, and from there to this Mission about 12 years ago. His wife is still young looking [she was forty-five at the time, ed.] and must have been beautiful as a girl. They are very worthy, refined and agreeable, and my short stay with them has been very pleasant indeed. Mr. Pratt is a well educated and superior man.

S 797 872 The Friends Shawnee Mission has done a good work among the Shawnees, but was never, I fancy, a very large school. There are but two boys there at present, but no doubt they have done as much good in proportion to the means employed as any other missionaries. The Friends are well adapted to gain the confidence of the Indian.

D 555 [*Delaware: Succession of Chiefs*]

In a brief conversation with Charles Johnny Cake, he informs me that the son never succeeds the father in the office of chief, but that the office goes either to a brother or the son of a sister. But strange to say the D 614 582 Turtle, the Wolf and the Turkey tribes each have several subdivisions, and while it was the ancient law that Turtle must always intermarry with Turtle, Wolf with Wolf and Turkey with Turkey, yet the D [611] subdivisions were not allowed to intermarry and in these the children were of the tribe of the mother. Mrs. Johnny Cake, the mother D ●124 614 582 of Charles, would not or could not tell me the names of the subdivisions. Charles would not today under the pretence that it was important to be right and he doubted his recollection of these subdivisions, although he said there were a number of each.

[54(c)]

124 I am very anxious to know. I asked an old
614 Delaware this morning, and he very coolly
582 told me that these questions were too small, by which he meant, I suppose, that it was prying into family matters rather impertinently.

614 It is by means of these subdivisions with
582 the prohibition of intermarriage that des-
611 cent in the female line is secured.

Lemuel R. Ketchum[90] says:

622 The Delawares have three Heads or great chiefs, one for each tribe. This chief is called Sa-ke-ma. It means Principal Chief. It is the name of the office, or the title of the person equivalent to President or King. They also have two subordinate chiefs. These chiefs together are called Ka-ke-um-ha-suk, or the chiefs. The term also includes the three
[623] head chiefs, and is used in contradistinction to councillors. The office has no special name. These two are inferior. If the three head chiefs decide upon a measure the two inferior must submit, but if two of the head chiefs and the two inferior chiefs should agree and the third head chief should stand out, the thing could not be done. The principal power is with the head chiefs. The three head chiefs can never go out to war, but the two inferior chiefs may. They are not, however, called war chiefs. Besides
623 these three the wise and experienced men of the nation are called councillors or Ha-ha-che-nowl-se-chick, which means simply councillors. These have a right to speak in a council of the chiefs. They can speak of their own motion without waiting to be
[562] asked by the chiefs. Women cannot speak in council.

*Religious System*

771 The Delawares believe in a Great Spirit,
[770] and in an Evil Spirit. They also believe in
[775] the immortality of the soul, and that they all went to heaven.

[90] [For footnote, see category 116, p. 209(C)-- Analyst]